

## Message Text

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47

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W  
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O 241635Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3314

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

USMISSION NATO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ROME IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T ADDIS ABABA 2175

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR AEMR ET US

SUBJECT: ITALIAN CONCERN RE DETERIORATING SITUATION IN  
ETHIOPIA: EMBASSY'S FURTHER ASSESSMENT

REFS: (A) ADDIS 2121; (B) STATE 40666

THERE FOLLOW THE EMBASSY'S FURTHER VIEWS ON THE SITUATION IN  
ADDIS ABABA REQUESTED IN THE REFERENCED STATE TELEGRAM:

1. ADDIS ABABA HAS REMAINED CALM, NOTWITHSTANDING THE  
GRADUALLY ACCELERATING DEGRADATION OF THE SECURITY SITUATION  
WITHIN ETHIOPIA. AS THE DEPARTMENT IS WELL AWARE, THE DETERIOR-  
ATION REFERRED TO HAS MANY CAUSES, INCLUDING MORE OR LESS TRAD-  
ITIONAL TRIBAL FIGHTING IN THE SOUTH; TENSIONS IN THE COUNTRY-  
SIDE RELATED TO CONTINUING UNCERTAINTIES OVER ALLEGEDLY IMPENDING  
LAND REFORM; THE FEARS ASSOCIATED WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AN  
ILL-PREPARED DEVELOPMENT THROUGH COOPERATION CAMPAIGN; LOCALIZED  
OUTBREAKS OF DISSIDENCE/LAWLESSNESS IN NORTHERN SHOA-MENZ,  
BEGEMIDIR, TIGRE; THE MEXICAN STANDOFF SITUATION BETWEEN THE  
GOVERNMENT AND THE AFAR; AND, FINALLY, THE SHARP ESCALATION OF  
HOSTILITIES IN ERITREA.

2. NOTWITHSTANDING THE SUPERFICIAL CALM PREVAILING IN THIS  
CAPITAL, THE CITY IS IN THE GRIP OF RECURRING SPATES OF TENSION  
RELATED TO ACTUAL OR ANTICIPATED EVENTS. THE DIRG'S "PSYWAR"

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ON NORTHERN "TRAITORS" AND THEIR ARAB BACKERS UNDERSTANDABLY

ENGENDERS FEAR WITHIN THE SIZABLE COMMUNITY OF NORTHERNERS AND MOSLEMS IN ADDIS AND ITS REGION AND HAS STIMULATED THOSE WHO HAVE THE RESOURCES AND THE WILL TO LEAVE THE CITY FOR THE NORTH. OTHERS, INCLUDING FOR EXAMPLE, SOME EMBASSY LOCAL EMPLOYEES, APPROACH EMBASSY OFFICERS WHOM THEY TRUST IN QUIET DESPERATION WITH REQUESTS FOR ASYLUM OR HELP IN LEAVING THE COUNTRY. THE DIRG'S PROPAGANDA HAS, HOWEVER, ALSO CONSOLIDATED BEHIND IT -- AT LEAST FOR NOW -- A FAIRLY SIGNIFICANT STRATUM OF LOCAL OPINION, PRIMARILY AMONG LOWER CLASSES, WHOSE PAVLOVIAN RESPONSE TO THE PRESENTATION OF THE TRADITIONAL ARAB THREAT TO ETHIOPIA'S INTEGRITY HAS PROBABLY MET THE DIRG'S EXPECTATIONS TO ITS SATISFACTION.

3. THE CITY ALSO EXPERIENCES TENSION BECAUSE IT ANTICIPATES INSURGENT COUNTERSTROKES TO THE EPMG MILITARY OPERATIONS IN ERITREA PARTICULARLY, OF COURSE, ON OCCASIONS SUCH AS THE RECENTLY CONCLUDED OAU CM. MOREOVER, THE CONTINUING ARREST OF ERITREANS/ TIGRES AND THEIR ASSOCIATES, WHOM THE AUTHORITIES FOR ONE REASON OR ANOTHER BELIEVED TO BE ACTUALLY OR POTENTIALLY DISLOYAL, NATURALLY ALSO CONTRIBUTES TO THIS CLIMATE.

4. FURTHERMORE, THE STILL SEMI-CLANDESTINE NATURE OF THE DIRG, THE PARALYSIS IN CIVIL SERVICE DECISION-MAKING WHICH THE FEAR IT HAS ENGENDERED CREATES, THE TALK OF SOCIALIST REDISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH WHICH ADVERSELY AFFECTS THE INTERESTS OF ADDIS BUREAUCRATS AND MIDDLE-CLASS MANAGERS, THE UNCERTAINTIES OF INTENTION RELATING TO MAJOR ISSUES SUCH AS LAND REFORM, ALL CONTRIBUTE TO AN AURA OF UNCERTAINTY AND CONCERN.

5. HAVING SAID ALL THIS, WE NEVERTHELESS NOTE THAT ADDIS REMAINS, BY LOCAL STANDARDS, REASONABLY WELL-POLICED AND THAT, ALTHOUGH THE MILITARY FORCES AVAILABLE TO THE DIRG IN THE CAPITAL AND ITS REGION HAVE BEEN GREATLY DEPLETED, THERE IS AS YET NO CLEAR INDICATION OF ANY COUNTERVAILING LEADERSHIP TRYING TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE OPPORTUNITIES INHERENT IN THIS STATE OF AFFAIRS. THIS LEADS US TO THE CONCLUSION THAT THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE IS NOT NECESSARILY LIKELY TO SEE A GENERALIZED BREAKDOWN IN LAW AND ORDER HERE. THE DANGER, RATHER, WOULD APPEAR TO BE THAT DEVELOPMENTS ELSEWHERE, ADVERSE TO THE DIRG AND ITS POLICIES AND PROGRAMS, MIGHT LEAD TO CHAOS OR, ALTERNATIVELY, TO THE VENTING OF THE TRADITIONAL AND ALWAYS LATENT XENOPHOBIA UPON TARGET GROUPS WHICH COULD RANGE FROM ERITREANS THROUGH A GAMUT OF BOURGEOIS ETHIOPIAN "CLASS ENEMIES" TO FOREIGNERS IN GENERAL.

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DISASTERS WE HAVE IN MIND COULD INCLUDE MAJOR ETHIOPIAN MILITARY REVERSALS OR MUTINIES IN THE NORTH; LARGE-SCALE ATTACKS ON DEVELOPMENT THROUGH COOPERATION CAMPAIGNERS WITH ATTENDANT LOSS OF STUDENT LIVES; A PRECIPITOUS, EXTREME LAND REFORM PROCLAMATION; AND ANY SUCCESSFUL SOMALI MOVE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ETHIOPIA'S CURRENT SITUATION IN THE OGADEN.

6. IN SHORT, ETHIOPIA IN ITS CURRENT STATE IS A COUNTRY WHOSE FUTURE IS ESPECIALLY CLOUDED IN UNCERTAINTIES AND WHOSE

PEOPLE ARE AFRAID. IT IS NEVERTHELESS WORTH RECALLING THAT THE TRADITIONAL SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES CONTINUE TO PROVIDE SOME GRASS ROOTS STABILITY THROUGH MUCH OF THE COUNTRYSIDE AND THAT EVEN IN THE INSURGENT ZONES THE DIRG IS FAR FROM POWERLESS WHENEVER AND WHEREVER IT WISHES TO IMPOSE ITS WILL. GIVEN THE SCOPE OF THE POTENTIAL PROBLEMS, HOWEVER, THERE ARE LIMITS TO THE ASSETS WHICH THE DIRG CAN MOBILIZE TO CONTAIN ALL THE STRESSES AND STRAINS THAT CIRCUMSTANCES MAY SURFACE THROUGHOUT THIS VAST COUNTRY IN THE DAYS AND WEEKS TO COME.

7. WE HAVE NO RECOMMENDATIONS AT PRESENT BEYOND THOSE PREVIOUSLY SUBMITTED.

WYMAN

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